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TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY

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MRS. MARY M. DAVIS.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.
1900.

Born in North Andover, July 16, 1803.

Died, April 30, 1866.

ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL.

By REV. CHANDLER ROBBINS, D. D.

WE have met together, at the call of God's wise and holy Providence, to perform the last offices for that dear friend whose lifeless form awaits its removal at our hands to its final resting-place. It only lingers on its way from the home which it has adorned and served to the grave which is open to receive it, till we shall have hallowed its departure,

and comforted ourselves, by the reading of God's holy word and humble prayer.

But there are feelings in our hearts which claim expression, there is a duty of our love to be discharged, before we proceed to those sacred acts. If one of *us* were in her place and she in ours, tears of love would glisten in her eyes, and fond regrets fill her heart. We should have left none on earth to mourn for us more sincerely, or to speak of us more tenderly. So would we mourn, and speak of her.

A life so valuable, a character so wor-

thy, a heart so warm and true, a friend so faithful, a Christian so consistent and exemplary, ought not to pass away from the earth without a just and affectionate tribute from those who have known her virtues, and been blessed by her benefactions. She needs, indeed, no human praise: she has gone beyond the reach of our eulogy. If she has met the approval of her Heavenly Master, she has attained the highest object of her desire. But we should be wanting in gratitude to Him who made her what she was and gave her to us, if, as we encircle

her bier, to take the last look and say the last farewell, no words should be spoken in recognition and commemoration of the preciousness of the gift.

There are those here present who have known her longer than myself; but few who can have known her better. Besides being a member of the Church to which I minister, she was during several years an inmate of my own family. I had thus the best of opportunities for becoming intimately acquainted with her disposition and character. There was, moreover, a peculiar attractiveness, I

may almost say fascination, in her influence, which drew me towards her, as it did many others, and constrained me to improve those opportunities and cultivate that acquaintance. The secret of that attractiveness I soon found, in the richness and warmth of her nature, the great vitality of her affections, the disinterested energy of her spirit, and the rare combination of a forcible and persistent will with quick sympathies and a gracious and graceful manner. Moreover, all these natural qualities were superintended and guided, improved and harmonized by a

strong Christian faith and high religious aspirations.

Wherever her lot might have been cast, she would have impressed herself upon those around her; her influence would have been strong and valuable; she would have adorned her station; she would have made herself useful, honored and beloved. Her heart was never cold, her mind never sluggish, her hands never idle. Yet little of this activity was expended upon herself: it was ever finding its exercise and its enjoyment in ministering to others; — first, to those

whom God had placed nearest, and next, to the poor and the sick, the aged and the desolate, and then, to a still widening circle, with no restriction within the necessary limit of human power.

Who that has lived within her reach cannot remember some kind service that she has rendered, or some token of love she has bestowed? And how many there are, beyond the circle of her relatives and friends, who associate her name with words and deeds of kindness that have made it precious.

In her duties to God she was as faith-

ful as to her human ties. She loved His House and worship. She loved her Saviour. She loved the Church. No one of those who, at different times, have sustained to her the pastoral relation, has not had reason to respect and confide in her, as a devoted co-worker in sacred duties, a kind and considerate parishioner, a sincere and trustworthy friend. None even of those who have habitually associated with her in the services of the Sanctuary, or in the social religious meeting, — who have taken part with her in the elevating and beautiful

acts of mutual worship, — in prayer and sacred song, — have failed to be won by the cordial sympathy of her manner, and to be impressed by the unaffected fervor of her devotion. There is not one of them who does not remember her as a personal friend, — certainly there is not one of them to whom she did not show herself friendly.

How dear she was to the members of her immediate family, how precious in the bosom of her home, we can only imagine, we may not attempt to tell. There, her affections were concentrated ;

there, her best services were constantly rendered; there, the full sweetness and energy of her influence was felt. If, among all of us who are here present, and among the many others whose regretful thoughts are directed hitherward at this hour, there is not one who does not grieve that we shall see her face no more, how deep must be the sorrow, how great the loss of those who superadd to the relation of friendship the strong and tender ties of kindred!

She died as she had lived, — believing, trusting, loving to the end. In the

chamber of her sickness she manifested the same spirit which had animated her in health, and she gave to the scene of her suffering and decline the same attractiveness which attended her at the fireside and in all her social walks. Calmly and meekly she submitted herself to the wise and perfect Will which "weakened her strength in the way and shortened her days." Obediently and lovingly she committed her soul in death to the strong and tender keeping of that good and gentle Shepherd whom she had loved and followed in life. In every work of

duty, and in every time of trial, during her mortal pilgrimage, she had found his kind support and proved his faithful care ; and when the shadows of the last night fell upon her, she feared not to trust his promises and fall asleep upon his arm.